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RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Report by the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 1997/74 of 18 April 1997, entitled "Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", the Commission on Human Rights, deeply concerned that, despite continuing efforts, contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and discrimination, inter alia against Blacks, Arabs and Muslims, anti-Semitism and related intolerance persisted and were even growing, and observing that the manifestations of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance boded ill for the international community and that racist propaganda and incitement to racial hatred were spreading and taking increasingly violent forms, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution at its fifty-fourth session.

2. In paragraph 14 of the resolution, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a detailed report on the financial and personnel resources required for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and invited the General Assembly to consider the possibility of providing the resources required for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the third Decade. In paragraph 16, the Commission requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take duly into account, within the framework of the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights, the repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for the establishment of a mechanism within the Centre as a focal point for coordinating all the activities of the Third Decade before they are carried out by the United Nations.

3. With regard to the foregoing, the attention of the Commission is drawn to the following activities, planned for 1998:

(a) Seminar on the enactment of national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination affecting ethnic groups, migrant workers and refugees in all parts of the world;

(b) Seminar on the eradication of incitement to racial hatred and discrimination;

(c) Study on economic factors contributing to the perpetuation of racism and racial discrimination;

(d) Study on the effects of racial discrimination on the children of minorities and those of migrant workers in the field of education, training and employment.

4. The focal point for coordinating all the activities of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, as requested, and backstopping of related activities at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would require additional resources which are not at present available.

5. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/111, in which it once again declared that all forms of racism and racial discrimination, whether in their institutionalized form or resulting from official doctrines of racial superiority or exclusivity, such as ethnic cleansing, are among the most serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world and must be combated by all available means. The Assembly therefore decided to convene a world conference on racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance not later than the year 2001. The main objectives of such a conference are specifically defined in that resolution.

6. The Assembly also decided that the Commission on Human Rights will act as the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and that its deliberation should be open-ended, allowing for the full participation of all States Members of the United Nations, specialized agencies and observers, in accordance with established practices. The Assembly requested Governments, the specialized agencies, other international organizations, concerned United Nations bodies, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and other human rights mechanisms to assist the preparatory committee, to undertake reviews and submit recommendations concerning the conference and the preparations therefor to the preparatory committee through the Secretary-General, and to participate actively in the conference.

7. By notes verbales and letters, the Secretary-General solicited information from Governments, United Nations organs and bodies, specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

8. As of 7 January 1998, replies had been received from the Governments of Niger, Switzerland and Turkey.

9. Substantive replies were received from the following intergovernmental organization: Council of Europe.

10. Replies were received from the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies: United Nations Children's Fund, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, International Labour Organization.

11. Replies were received from the following non-governmental organizations: Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits l'homme, International Association of Educators for World Peace, International Association for Religious Freedom, International League for Human Rights, International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization.

12. Any additional replies received after 5 January 1998 will be reproduced in an addendum to the present document.

I. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Niger

[Original: French]
[11 December 1997]

The Republic of the Niger stated that the competent Niger authorities wished to encourage the Commission in its initiative for the convening of a world conference against racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and that they would like to play an active part in the preparations for the conference.

Portugal

[Original: French]
[7 January 1997]

1. Portugal is able at the present stage to give an account, if only a summary one, of the way in which it is giving effect to the principles behind the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination through its legislation and policies.

2. Article 13 of the Constitution establishes the principle of equality under which all citizens have the same social dignity and are equal before the law. No one shall be privileged, or shall be favoured with, injured by or deprived of any right, or exempted from any duty because of his ancestry, sex, race, language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic situation or social condition.

3. Aliens and stateless persons staying or residing in Portugal enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same duties as Portuguese citizens. Political rights in general, the performance of public duties that are not predominantly technical, and rights and duties restricted to Portuguese citizens are excepted from this principle of equality. The law does, however, allow nationals of certain countries to vote and to be elected in municipal elections (with regard to eligibility to vote and be elected, Act 50/96 of 4 September amended article 2, paragraph 2 (a), of Decree Law 702-B/76 of 29 December - the electoral law for local communities - providing for the publication of a list by the Government before each election for municipal bodies; declaration 2-A/97 stated that Portuguese and nationals of the European Union, Brazil and Cape Verde, Argentina, Israel, Norway, Peru and Uruguay could vote and that nationals of Portugal, the European Union, Brazil and Cape Verde, Peru and Uruguay could be elected) and provides for the possibility of granting certain rights of a political nature to citizens of countries whose official language is Portuguese under an agreement between Portugal and those countries.

4. In Portugal's domestic law various measures have been put into effect with a view to combating possible violations of the principle of non-discrimination. Mention may be made of the establishment of the Office of

the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities, the Timor Community reception Commission and the Commission for the Extraordinary Regularization of Aliens.

5. Decree-Law 296-A/95 of 17 November, concerning the organic law of the thirteenth constitutional Government, provided for the establishment of the Office of High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities and placed it under the authority of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

6. The establishment of the Office of High Commissioner was prompted by the new challenges facing Portugal as a country of immigration which had traditionally been a country of emigration. This has made it necessary to introduce measures for integrating immigrants' families into Portuguese society. The ultimate aim of the policy is to avoid xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination with regard to aliens living in Portugal.

7. In performing his duties, the High Commissioner has four main tasks:

1. To encourage consultation and dialogue with bodies representing immigrants or ethnic minorities in Portugal and study of the question of the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities, in collaboration with the social partners, social solidarity institutions and other public or private bodies involved in the field;

2. To help improve living conditions for immigrants in Portugal so as to facilitate their integration into society, with respect for their identity and culture of origin. He also has to help ensure that all citizens residing legally in Portugal enjoy identical dignity and opportunities, so as to eliminate discrimination and combat racism and xenophobia;

3. To monitor the work of the different public services concerned with the entry, stay and departure of foreign citizens visiting Portugal, with respect for their responsibilities and those of the competent members of the Government. He is to help formulate and monitor policies for actively combating exclusion, encouraging horizontal interdepartmental action by the public services and government departments involved in the sector;

4. To propose measures, in particular of a normative nature, for giving support to immigrants and ethnic minorities.

8. The Working Group for the Equality and Integration of Gypsies was set up by Council of Ministers resolution 157/96 of 19 October and has two basic objectives: firstly, to make a detailed analysis of the difficulties in the way of gypsies' integration into Portuguese society and, secondly, to prepare proposals on ways of eliminating such situations of social exclusion.

9. In January 1997, the Working Group (under the chairmanship of the High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities) submitted a report on its work, the main feature of which was a recognition of Portuguese society's tendency towards exclusion and indifference with regard to gypsies. The gypsy community in Portugal encounters problems of social, economic, cultural and

even political exclusion. Lack of socio-professional skills, low levels of literacy and lack of success at school contribute to the situation of poverty and deprivation from which gypsies suffer.

10. Other factors, such as social discrimination and indifference (or even, in certain cases, intolerance), reinforce the stigmatization of this group. This social situation is aggravated by other phenomena such as the high level of drug trafficking and consumption, poor housing conditions, and the lack of means of subsistence, prospects of integration and social mobility, particularly for the youngest members of the group.

11. A study in the Lisbon region counted 6,000 gypsies living in the area. The population was a very young one (44 per cent under the age of 14), 57 per cent living in rundown districts, 69 per cent making their living as street pedlars, and 20 per cent with no occupations. As far as gypsy children are concerned, only 62 per cent are enrolled in school, and of those half have a very irregular attendance record, creating great problems for their education. About 50 per cent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 do not go to school.

12. The Working Group's study also describes various kinds of action being taken to ensure equality for gypsies and integrate them, among which the following may be mentioned:

(a) The National Anti-Poverty Programme: various projects under this programme cover the gypsy population;

(b) The experimental projects for a guaranteed minimum income: many gypsies are candidates for the guaranteed minimum income or are already receiving it, in projects under way in seven different parts of the country;

(c) As regards housing, reference may be made to a series of legislative measures creating conditions for a more effective response to gypsy citizens' housing needs. It is thus possible to plan housing with a different layout, reflecting the future occupants' culture. A case in point is Decree-Law 73/96 which allows greater flexibility in the standard types of accommodation when controlled-cost housing is being built;

(d) As regards the promotion of employment, mention may be made of the cooperation agreement between the Employment and Vocational Training Institute and the Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Lisbon, under the title "Socioeconomic integration of young gypsies". This project will cover 200 persons over a period of 2 years, enabling participants to acquire knowledge in the areas of vocational training, social adaptation and education;

(e) In the field of education, various measures have been undertaken, including the preparation of a teacher's guide (which goes through the whole school curriculum from the standpoint of gypsy culture and makes suggestions for activities with children from other cultures), the translation of a number of works on schooling for gypsy children and on tolerance and human rights, and projects for intercultural education.

13. In connection with the application and observance of the principle of non-discrimination, the inter-ministerial Timor Community Reception Commission was set up by resolution 53/95 (Official Gazette, seconds series, 7 December 1995). The commission's mandate is to coordinate and assess proposals for the development of integrated policies for receiving and integrating the Timor community in Portugal.

14. Act 17/96 of 24 May provided for a process for extraordinary regularization of the status of clandestine immigrants. This process is coordinated by a National Commission for Extraordinary Regularization, which considers applications for regularization.

15. Such regularization was necessary in order to enable the foreigners in question to enjoy their social, economic and cultural rights fully, particularly as regards work, social security benefits and access to housing, since rehousing programmes catered solely for persons whose status was regular. The extraordinary regularization process took place between 11 June and 11 December 1996; 35,082 aliens made applications, including 9,255 from Angola, 6,782 from Cape Verde, 5,308 from Guinea Bissau, 2,330 from Brazil, 1,549 from Sao Tome and Principe and 416 from Mozambique; 25,730 out of the total number of aliens were from Portuguese-speaking countries. 3,965 were not accepted and 3,772 of them are now in the process of appealing against the decision not to admit them.

16. The National Commission for Extraordinary Regularization has already given a favourable decision on 111,856 applications.

17. In conclusion, it may be said that these examples show that Portugal is one of the countries that are actively combating racism and intolerance, trying to ensure equality for and to integrate all groups of the population which might be affected by phenomena of racism and intolerance. These are examples of good practice which could, along the lines of what has been done by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), under the Council of Europe, serve as a model and a source of inspiration for national measures to apply the principles of the Third Decade against Racism and Racial Discrimination. This would be a first step in the preparations for the world conference mentioned in the resolution.

Switzerland

[Original: French]
[17 December 1997]

1. The Government transmitted a report on the activities of the Federal Commission Against Racism* which describes the political situation in Switzerland during 1997, a situation dominated by the debate on the role played by Switzerland during the Second World War, and in particular the

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* The Federal Commission Against Racism is a national institution on which both the Government and civil society are represented and which specializes in dealing with questions relating to discrimination.

question of unclaimed accounts. The revival of anti-Semitic talk in this connection led the Federal Commission Against Racism to intervene and to draw up this report, the first of its kind.

2. The Federal Commission Against Racism also launched a first public relations campaign to mobilize public opinion against racism and anti-Semitism. The political debate revealed the importance of the facts of racism in all its forms. The report deals among other things with the legal aspects, in particular the work of the federal courts and their decisions in the area of anti-Semitism, denial of the holocaust, anti-Semitic talk and contempt for the dignity of foreigners.

3. The Federal Commission proposes to publish later on a report on anti-Semitism in Switzerland and the information campaigns conducted in the worlds of work, journalism and public relations. The report also describes the pilot study on possible discrimination in the area of the law relating to aliens (family reunification). Action planned for 1998 includes: continuation of the campaign for journalists, "Les belles apparences", and publication of a pamphlet on language and racism for journalists' use, continuation of the campaign for young workers, presentation of the pilot study on discrimination in the law relating to aliens and a contribution to the development of an appropriate instrument at the national level for permanent monitoring of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

Turkey

[Original: English]
[18 December 1997]

1. The Government of Turkey reported that developing effective measures at the international level to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is and should be one of the fundamental topics which the Commission on Human Rights has to tackle so as to ensure universal protection and promotion of human rights.

2. Turkey's devotion to the cause of gathering unanimous and comprehensive international reactions to the resurgence of racism in its most subtle and cruel forms continues unabated. The interest of Turkey in this cause stems from the fact that millions of Turkish citizens living abroad as foreign residents are the vulnerable group facing racism and discrimination daily. In a way, their material and mental agonies are a striking example before the Commission on Human Rights, recalling the urgency to react. It was against this background that Turkey co-sponsored Commission resolution 1995/11 as well as resolution 1997/74.

3. The Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was launched in 1993, since the principal objectives of the previous two Decades had not been achieved. Turkey observes with dismay and concern that the Programme of Action for the Third Decade has so far not been fully implemented, for the same reason that doomed the two previous Decades to failure, i.e. the lack of adequate resources. This unfortunate fact must be a serious concern for every State Member of the United Nations, United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, other intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. Since human rights

are universal and indivisible, the international community as a whole should pay the same attention to racism, which is among the most serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world, as to other forms of human rights violations. In fact, the implementation of the Programme of Action is a shared responsibility of the international community at large.

4. The Turkish Government estimates that if the Third Decade also fails to attain its objectives, it would be a significant setback for the United Nations in the important field of human rights.

5. Turkey is prepared to support every required action in order to give a new impetus to the Third Decade. It is essential that a focal point be established within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which will be responsible for reviewing information concerning activities carried out within the framework of the Third Decade and making specific recommendations on such activities. On the other hand, cognizant of the fact that an increase in the voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Third Decade is indispensable for the due implementation of the Programme, Turkey plans to contribute to this Fund in 1998.

6. Turkey also supports the holding of a world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as a means of giving further impetus to the Third Decade. The Government is of the opinion that such a conference will be instrumental not only for much-needed awareness-raising, but also to review the progress made in the fight against racism, assess the effectiveness of the methods and mechanisms used so far and, if need be, develop new standards.

7. The Government equally supports the decision that the Commission on Human Rights would act as the Preparatory Committee for the world conference. In view of this mandate, the Commission must embark at its fifty-fourth session on a preparatory process along the lines of a plan of action to be devised by the Commission itself. In sketching out this plan of action, the Commission should take into account the views of all concerned actors and mechanisms in the field, particularly those of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Council of Europe

[Original: English]
[17 December 1997]

1. The Council of Europe reported that the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government took place in Strasbourg, France, on 10 and 11 October 1997. On that occasion, the 40 Council of Europe member States called for an intensification of action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance and decided to strengthen the activities of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). The Council also announced the creation of its Internet site on combating racism and intolerance, which can be consulted at the following address: www.ecri.coe.fr.

2. Concerning the convening of the World Conference on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the Council of Europe intends, subject to approval by its Committee of Ministers, to contribute to the preparation of the World Conference by organizing a major event along the lines of the satellite conferences organized by the Council of Europe prior to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Children's Fund

[Original: English]
[17 December 1997]

1. The United Nations Children's Fund is of the view that a global gathering focusing on this subject would need to address the enormous impact that practices of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have on the well-being of children and on the enjoyment of their rights, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. With 191 States parties to the Convention, this treaty has reached nearly universal ratification, except for the United States of America and Somalia which have not acceded to the Convention. Therefore, it follows that since the right of the child to non-discrimination, found in article 2 of the Convention, has been recognized worldwide, it could serve as a vehicle to bring the international community together to address issues of global concern.

2. It should be noted that several provisions in the Convention recognize specific rights of the child in the area of human rights education, information, and rights of minorities which are especially relevant to the World Conference. In particular, article 29 recognizes that the child's education should be directed to respecting human rights and within a spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance. Moreover, article 30 recognizes that children belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority, including indigenous children, should not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language. Article 17 (d), while stressing the important role of the mass media in providing information and material from a diversity of international and national sources, also recognizes that the media should have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous.

3. Another area that could be addressed is gender discrimination and the situation of girls. In this regard, an important reference is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been widely ratified.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

[Original: English]
[23 December 1997]

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is concerned about racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, especially from two points of view. First, ethnic and racial persecution is a major cause of refugee flight. One of the purposes of UNHCR is to identify and implement durable solutions to the problem of refugees. Second, it is well documented that refugees and asylum seekers are often the targeted victims of xenophobic and racist attacks. Indeed, such violence has increased in some areas during the 1990s. One aspect of the role of UNHCR in the protection of asylum seekers and refugees is to shield them from exposure to manifestations of racism and xenophobia in the country of asylum. Because of this dual impact, UNHCR believes that a comprehensive approach is needed in dealing with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance affecting refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR also acknowledges that a convening of a world conference to assess the problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to assess progress made in the past few decades, and to look for innovative and effective means of fighting them, is a worthy initiative. In light of the need for a comprehensive approach, the World Conference will offer an opportunity to bring together various actors whose efforts need to be coordinated in an effective plan of action. The momentum created by past world conferences on other topics, notably the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, has been substantial and has led to increased State and agency commitment to the issues dealt with at those conferences. The elimination of racism is instrumental in securing basic human rights for asylum seekers and refugees, and the UNHCR is pleased to see the issue given a higher profile by the convening of the Conference.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

[Original: English]
[26 November 1997]

1. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) reiterated the need to combat racism and racial discrimination and emphasized the appropriateness of convening a world conference in order to sensitize the different parties involved and formulate recommendations to cease any form of intolerance towards the full respect of human rights.

2. Furthermore, INSTRAW strongly recommended that in preparing the agenda of the World Conference, the possibility of including an item on the double discrimination faced by many women worldwide, due to their gender as well as their race, should be considered.

International Labour Organization

[Original: English]
[3 December 1997]

1. The International Labour Office (ILO) drew attention to paragraph 16 of the resolution, in which the Commission on Human Rights requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take duly into account, within the framework of the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights, the repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for the establishment of a mechanism within the Centre as a focal point for coordinating all the activities of the Third Decade before they are carried out by the United Nations. ILO reported that it would be pleased to work with the focal point when the mechanism for coordination was defined. It also noted that ILO has been carrying out a large number of activities in this field, which have previously been reported to the deliberative bodies of the United Nations, within the framework of its constitution and the mandate laid down by the standards adopted by the International Labour Conference.

2. ILO would be pleased to contribute to the planning of the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and expressed its readiness to consider what contribution it could make.

III. INFORMATION FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization

[Original: French]
[10 December 1997]

1. The permanent secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) submitted the following comments and observations.

2. AAPSO considers that the problems arising from this evil which still prevails at the end of the twentieth century will persist and could even become permanent. Effective and constructive action should therefore be taken by the international community to combat the phenomenon and eradicate it.

3. It is in this spirit that AAPSO emphasizes the need to convene an international conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. The work of preparing for this conference and analysing its main theme and sub-topics should be begun as soon as possible, since the holding of such a conference would make people more aware of the danger of a perpetuation of this evil, insofar as it may develop and take different forms (e.g. at the economic and ideological levels) in an economic and social system dominated by globalization and benefiting from the rapid progress of science and technology.

4. AAPSO therefore proposes that in order to back up the campaign against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, the international conference should draft and adopt a programme of action for the Third Decade,

to which the entire international community would commit itself, while taking care to adopt the necessary measures in order to establish strict control and constant monitoring for the activities undertaken to combat this evil.

5. For this purpose, and particularly to assist the competent special rapporteur, it would be desirable to establish a special section or department on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance attached to the United Nations office in each country, which would work closely with local international organizations.

6. In order to achieve better coordination of these different activities at the local and regional levels, an agency of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be established in each continent, (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe).

7. AAPSO considers that preventive action should be taken, particularly in the fields of education, teaching, public information and practical work at all levels of society (schools, workplaces, conferences, mass media, etc.). It goes without saying that better coordination of the action taken by Governments, civil society, local and international NGOs and all those who feel concerned by this problem is necessary.

Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme

[Original: French]
[26 December 1997]

1. Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme considers that in preparing for the world conference, the methodology of regional conferences should be followed, in accordance with the practice already tried out since the Vienna Conference in 1993. Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme believes that non-governmental organizations could play an important part in this process. It emphasizes the position and role played by the European continent and the Mediterranean basin in the field of racism and migrations, since new forms of racism and xenophobia due to migratory movements in this region are frequently to be observed.

2. The report states that a study was made of this phenomenon at a seminar organized at Casablanca on "Migration and human rights".

3. Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme considers, finally, that intergovernmental conferences are not able to discuss problems of racism and racial discrimination freely, because States' representatives are closely involved in their Governments' immigration and emigration policies. It considers that, on the contrary, NGOs would be best placed to analyse the problems and causes of new forms of intolerance and racism connected with migratory movements. However, Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme suggests abandoning the traditional framework of international regions based on the United Nations system, which divides Europe from North Africa, and focusing on the Mediterranean context,

which is essential for migratory movements from North Africa. Intercenter - Centre méditerranéen des droits de l'homme is ready to cooperate in this field and make a thorough study of the problems of intolerance, racism and xenophobia in the region.

International Association of Educators for World Peace

[Original: English]
[15 December 1997]

1. The International Association of Educators for World Peace has been in the forefront in promoting the goals and objectives of the United Nations relating to the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. People everywhere need to be given responsible jobs based on their ability to perform properly and effectively in the best interests of the community. People should not be excluded because of their race, regardless of whether such people form a part of the minority or the majority.

2. To this end, the International Association of Educators for World Peace used the media to reach millions of people so as to bring into perspective the various problems facing our world and how to approach them without the practice of racism, by demonstrating that the colour of the skin is irrelevant and that the character and personality of the individual are all that matters. In this regard, it launched educational programmes and created pilot schools geared toward creating a global community family spirit among nations and among people of all cultures, races, and ethnic backgrounds.

3. The organization published a newsletter, the Peace Progress Journal, the Peace Education Journal and the United Nations News newspaper.

International Association for Religious Freedom

[Original: English/French]
[19 December 1997]

1. The International Association for Religious Freedom is in favour of convening a world conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Efforts should also be made in connection with this conference to combat other manifestations of discrimination and intolerance, such as those based on religion or belief according to the communication received by the International Association for Religious Freedoms. It is suggested that the conference should deal with all forms of intolerance, including religious intolerance, as the Secretary-General did on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10 December 1997.

International League for Human Rights

[Original: English]
[29 December 1997]

1. The subject matter of the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance is an important one among the activities and the goals of the United Nations. In particular, the

prohibition against discrimination on grounds of race and colour is central. This is noted in the Charter of the United Nations itself, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and numerous other instruments. The prohibition of racial discrimination is a customary norm of international law. The ILHR considers that racial discrimination and the inequities and abuses that stem from it are often at the root of conflicts that plague modern societies. There are moral, legal, as well as practical reasons why this subject is an appropriate and important one to which the United Nations should devote a world conference. The extensive, and often distressing revelations and presentations before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other expert bodies have made it abundantly clear that racial discrimination is a worldwide phenomenon and must be rooted out in all parts of the world. The ILHR also believes that the World Conference will act as a global forum.

2. The root causes that underlie and exacerbate manifestations of racial discrimination and related intolerance are many, but economic and social deprivation, and in particular the stresses of societies in transition and in economic distress or uncertainty, often push intolerance and practices of discrimination into a more insidious phase, i.e. incitement to hatred and violence.

3. The ILHR suggests that the World Conference should pay special attention to the problems of societies in transition from dictatorship to democracy, and the need to develop institutions that can help to mitigate and end racial discrimination locally. The ILHR affirmed that, based on years of reporting, monitoring and working to devise methods to eradicate racial discrimination, it is essential to undertake efforts to strengthen national institutions designed to promote racial and intercultural harmony, to establish such institutions where they do not exist, and to promote interaction between national and international levels.

4. According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in article 1, "the term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life". The ILHR believed that this definition offers a guide to the dimensions of the subject, but also believes it would be useful for the World Conference to look at racism in private, as well as public life. Experiences of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) reveal that racial discrimination which persists in private life has a highly negative impact on both public and private life and policies in various societies. The State's inability or unwillingness to act to eradicate racial discrimination in private life is, in fact, a matter of public concern in the Commission on Human Rights. The ILHR considers that this point should be a topic of consideration at the World Conference. The ILHR therefore recommends that the World Conference should utilize the Convention's definition, expanded to include discrimination in private life, and the matter of State responsibility for inaction to eradicate it.

5. The ILHR noted that the intolerance that manifests itself in racial discrimination often spills over and becomes indistinguishable from religious discrimination and intolerance. Inter-group conflict sometimes is sparked by intolerance towards the race and ethnicity as well as the religion of "the other". The ILHR recalled that the drafting of the Convention began in 1960 with an effort to produce two declarations following appalling manifestations of anti-Semitism in 1959/60 in Europe and North America. Although the racial and religious declarations were separated in the drafting process in the cold war years and the religious declarations took nearly 20 years to complete, the ILHR is convinced that the two subjects are closely linked. It has noted that anti-Semitism has been directed against Jews as a religious group (regardless of the race of the individuals) and against Jews as a racial or ethnic group (regardless of the religious beliefs of the individuals). It cuts across both of these issues, and the ILHR suggests that anti-Semitism should be a subject of consideration on the agenda of the World Conference.

6. The final recommendation concerns the role of non-governmental organizations at the World Conference. An access, comparable to that at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women should be provided to NGOs. The preparatory process should be open to broad NGO participation, for they were the first to monitor racial discrimination and the first to devise proposals for changes in policy and practice. The regional meetings should be broad-based, accessible and open with a view to identifying regional problems, and regional solutions, utilizing international examples and conforming to global standards.

International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization

[Original: English]
[16 December 1997]

The International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization recommended to the Commission on Human Rights the following points:

(a) To use the term "economic apartheid" to denote a tool used to deny persons economic, political and social equality on the basis of race;

(b) To review discrimination at the United Nations, among Member States and with respect to specialized agencies' policies of bias when awarding development contracts, contracts relating to matters of business-culture development in Africa;

(c) To acknowledge development as a human right and that, as a result of slavery, racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Black Africans and other oppressed people do not have an adequate economic background and should be granted every assistance to unite with their natural trading partners living in the diaspora as a sustainable solution to help bring about an end to racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(d) To support the efforts of the International Multiracial Shared Cultural Organization to have museums and private collectors around the world listed as human rights violators if they refuse to return immediately those

cultural items, taken and used by the possessors for economic gain and profit, that are a part of the cultural heritage of the peoples and their communities requesting their safe return.

CONCLUSION

1. As stressed by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination did not command sufficient interest to lead to far-reaching activities. Financial and human resources are still lacking.

2. The Commission on Human Rights, at its present session, in preparing for the World Conference on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, should make once again a strong commitment to combating racism and racial discrimination, in conformity with the commitment made in 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna.

3. With particular reference to General Assembly resolution 52/111, paragraphs 28 and 29, consideration should be given to the possible modalities of the preparatory committee for the World Conference, which will be the Commission itself, and to the active participation of Governments, specialized agencies, other international organizations, concerned United Nations bodies, regional organization, NGOs, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and other human rights mechanisms, in assisting the preparatory committee.

4. During the seminar organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in November 1997 on the role of the Internet with regard to the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (E/CN.4/1998/77/Add.2), it was noted with great concern that the Internet was playing an increasing role in disseminating hate speech and racial discrimination worldwide. The seminar concluded that the continuation of cooperation and the adoption of international juridical measures with a view to prohibiting racism on the Internet would be an important contribution to preparations for the World Conference.